

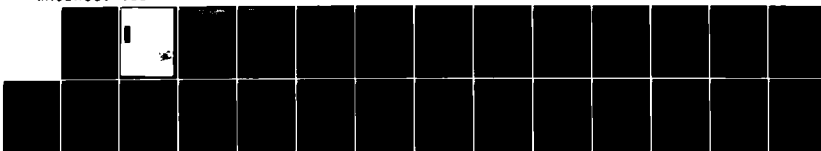
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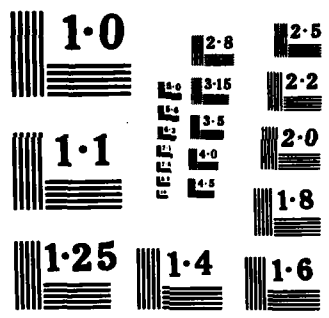
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economic conditions and social immobility of the regions have resulted in an ideal setting for Communist style insurrections. Already, Cuba has become one of the most important and active Soviet surrogates in the world and Nicaragua is falling close by with strong Soviet/Cuban support. Although the United States has taken some strong economic measures in the way of foreign aid and easing trade restrictions, much more is needed to defuse the political and social unrest in all of Latin America. One means to insure regional stability and meet the growing Soviet military threat is to streamline the US military command structure in the area and assign more permanent US naval ships to the region. The Caribbean squadrons would be based out of Key West, Florida (as is presently) and Puerto Rico. The additional ships would not only give some real and available naval power to the Southern Command but would demonstrate a firm US commitment to the Caribbean area.

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THE NEED FOR A STRONG CARIBBEAN NAVAL FORCE

AN INDIVIDUAL ESSAY

by

Commander William H Cahill

US Army War College  
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013  
1 April 1985

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# ABSTRACT

The Caribbean Basin countries have long been of strategic and economic value to the United States. Their military value of the Caribbean sea lines of communications (SLOC) were recognized in the late Nineteenth Century by the noted maritime strategist Alfred T. Mahan and come to fruition with a fierce U-boat campaign by Adolf Hitler during World War II. By and large, however, the United States has ignored the region until just recently. Now, the U.S. must face a growing naval power projection force being built by the Soviet Union. Poor economic conditions and social immobility of the regions has resulted in an ideal setting for Communist style insurrections. Already, Cuba has become one of the most important and active Soviet surrogates in the world and Nicaragua is falling close by with strong Soviet/Cuban support. Although the United States has taken some strong economic measures in the way of foreign aid and easing trade restrictions, much more is needed to defuse the political and social unrests in all of Latin America. One means to insure regional stability and meet the growing Soviet military threat is to streamline the U.S. military command structure in the area and assign more permanent U.S. naval ships to the region. The Caribbean squadrons would be based out of Key West Florida (as is presently) and Puerto Rico. The additional ships would not only give some real and available naval power to the Southern Command but would demonstrate a firm U.S. commitment to the Caribbean area.

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From the beginning, the Caribbean Basin has been a source of wealth, controversy and romance to the world. The racial mixtures, strategic importance and uncertain political climate of this area has lead to exploitation and has contributed greatly to the lack of development in this region. We quickly associate all of Latin America with a continuous successions of revolutions and violent unrest within the predominant poor of these countries. Now, a shift in the world power structure, that is the Soviet Union's emerging ability to project their armed forces worldwide, has seen a shift in Soviet purpose in the Caribbean Basin. The previously stated purpose of the Communist bloc in Latin America, "to create a favorable image of the USSR; that is, an image of power, progress, and benevolence,"<sup>1</sup> is beginning to chance. We see the Soviet Union doing more than just projecting an image in today's Latin American world. What we see today rather is a blatant exportation of Violent revolution complete with arms of all descriptions and the training to use them. One of the major challenges that the United States faces for the rest of this century is just how to deal with a growing Soviet threat in our own back yard and, at the same time, honor our military commitments to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and other worldwide treaty commitments.

To understand the problem the U.S. faces, it is relevant to look at the history of the Caribbean Basin with respect to the population mixture, political growth and outside forces that have affected the region. Of course, the Western world or civilized world, as they would rather be referred to, became aware of the new world on October 12, 1492 when Columbus mistook the islands, later to be known as the West Indies, for India. The inhabitants of the West Indies Islands and the surrounding main lands were very primitive war-like natives who practiced cannibalism and called themselves Caribs.



They, along with their more sophisticated brothers living on the interiors of the mainland, the Aztecs of Mexico, Mayas of Central America, and Incas of Peru, were little match for the stream of Spanish explorers, soldiers and priests who were to follow the Columbus discovery. As the Spanish (later the French, Dutch, and English) began to realize the value of the rich soil, mineral wealth, and chance for personal power that could be had in this new region, labor was required in great amounts and was imported in the form of Negro slaves from Africa. Indian slave labor was forbidden by the Spanish crown. However, Indian slaves were common on the South and Central American land areas despite Spain's efforts to declare the Indian people "free".<sup>2</sup>

Negros were considered more suited to the hard labor and heat of the area and Negro slave labor became prevalent. In fact, by 1789 there were 480,000 Negro slaves on the Island of Hispaiola as compared to 30,000 whites and some 25,000 mulattos.<sup>3</sup> Basically, this rapid influx of races to the Caribbean area formed four distinct categories of people. The first category being "White" or "Creole". This group formed the basis of power and were the political leaders, lawyers, and big land owners. They could very clearly trace their lineage back to Spain or France. The Creole's governed with authority and land grants given to them by the crown. However, as they grew richer and more powerful, they often disregarded many of the Crown's attempts to regulate their actions. The second two groups were the Mestizos (Indian and White mixture) and the Mulattoes (Black and White mixture). They were considered free, but were generally referred to as "idle rabble" and not considered in very high esteem. The fourth group were the Indians. It took little time for the Spanish to eliminate this group from the islands. However, Indians of the main continent were not as easily controlled. Despite rulings from Spain prohibiting Indian slavery as early stated, abuse of this regulation was

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common during the early years of development when labor was sorely required. Today, we can still see vestiges of this early caste system with the White or Creole section of many Latin American countries still holding the wealth and political power while the mixed, Indian, and black people live in ignorance and poverty.

Thanks to Christopher Columbus, the Caribbean Sea became dominated by Spain. Hispaniola, Columbus' first discovery, became the center of trade and boasted the first permanent Spanish settlement of Santo Domingo (1502). Santo Domingo basically remained the most important Spanish strong hold until about 1515 when Cuba began to emerge as a dominant jumping off point for further expeditions to Mexico and North America. About 1650, Spain began losing control over her new world colonies. This was due partly to political and economic events in Europe and partly to an influx of English and French adventurers into the Caribbean colonies. The seas were alive with pirates and buccaneers operating either openly or secretly with the sanction of their governments. Men like Henry Morgan ruthlessly plundered ships and openly attacked Spanish cities like Cartegena and Panama City. As a side note, Morgan was knighted for his efforts against the Spanish colonies and made governor of Jamaica by Queen Elizabeth. A hero in English eyes, Morgan is better portrayed as a selfish murderer to most. At any rate, buccaneering had a profound effect on the new world economy and had the side effect demonstrating Spain's inability to influence events in her new world colonies. In fact, Spain was now losing most of its political and economic hold on the region and, as wars and political unrest continued to dominate Europe, the eventual break with Spain and her new world colonies was inevitable.

Independence movements began to take place in the Caribbean and Latin America about 1808. Discontent of the Creoles coupled with the disappearance

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of the Spanish Monarchy as a result of Napoleon's invasion in Spain, gave good opportunity for independence movements to succeed. Venezuela declared independence in 1811, Columbia in 1819, the United Provinces of Central America (consisting of today's Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and El Salvador) in 1821, and Brazil (from Portugal) in 1822. Cuba was the last Spanish colony achieving independence in 1901 as a result of the Spanish American War. In general terms, however, the break with Spain did not change the attitudes, habits, legal, and administrative institutions of the colonial period but merely represented a change of power from the monarchy or authority in Spain to the Creole upper class of the independence region. Regional disputes and power struggles seemed to destabilize Latin America from the start of independence. The United Provinces of Central America disbanded in 1838 after only seventeen years of existence due to internal conflicts. The Haitians invaded the Dominican Republic in 1801 which started escalating turmoil that saw the Dominican Republic reentering the Spanish colonial system in 1861 and eventually resulted in the first of United States military interventions of that island in 1916. Adding to the political problems in Latin American countries was their general failure to develop a large middle class society or strong industrial base. In general, the Latin American countries were plagued with poor economies due to their reliance on limited diversification of agricultural products, a small industrial base relying on capital intensive rather than labor intensive industries, and a social system which tends to keep power and money within the tradition elite of that country. Poverty, social unrest, and declining economies, particularly among the former Spanish colonies (Table 1) has kept the Caribbean unstable and open to revolutions and insurgent wars for most of their independent histories. A look at the number of unconstitutional changes of governments in selected

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Caribbean Basin countries (Table 2) can only reemphasize the magnitude of the unrest in this area.

To add to regional problems in Latin America was an ever-growing giant to the north, the United States. Quick to recognize the independence of Latin America, President Monroe announced his doctrine--that any European attempt to recapture the lost Spanish colonies would be regarded as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States--in 1823. Of course, just 25 years later in a minor dispute with Mexico over Texas, the United States annexed about half the claimed by Mexico into its own new territories. Other examples of United States intervention into Latin American affairs include the Spanish American War (1898), Dominican Republic (1916-1924), Haiti (1915-1934), Nicaragua (1912-1924), Mexico (1917), Panama (1903), and Cuba (1906, 1912, 1917, and 1933). It's little wonder Latin American's have become suspicious of any United States initiatives in the region. Besides military intervention, economic improvement in the region, as is evident by the low priority that the Marshall Plan gave to this area when compared to Europe after World War II, has not been strong in U.S.-Latin American relation. The U.S. is perceived as ignoring the severe economic problems of its southern neighbors. In some defense, a few positive initiatives have been undertaken over the years. President Roosevelt initiated his Good Neighbor Policy in 1933 and that certainly had its positive effects until the world focused on the war in Europe. President Kennedy with his Alliance for Progress boast many success in the region. But, by in large, the United States has never really taken Latin America very seriously and has done little to dispel the "Yankee Imperialist" image which seems to be predominant Latin American thinking today.

So why has the Caribbean Basin area become so important to the U.S. as of late? In fact, it has always been militarily and economically important to the U.S., but there has never been a real threat in the region until recent years. The strategic importance of the Caribbean was realized as early as 1875--by the great naval strategist Alfred Mahan but was not recognized by most until the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914 that linked the Atlantic to the Pacific by saving 6,000 miles or more of transit around Cape Horn. The Canal not only provided a vast economical boom to the world but proved invaluable during World War II allowing the shifting of war ships and war goods from one theater to another rapidly. The Panama Canal has, in fact, increased in importance over the years. The U.S. and other countries are becoming increasingly more dependent on this vital sea line of communication (SLOC) as world economies shift and Western economies become more dependent on imports. Additionally, it is impractical and beyond the means of the U.S. to maintain a navy on both coasts which is capable of meeting commitments to all treaties. Naval assets would be shifted from one coast to another in order to augment combat or lift requirements to meet contingencies. The use of the Panama Canal for shifting these assets remains the only quick and effective means. The Panama Canal, then, is and will remain for some time to come the most vital SLOC to the U.S. global strategic balance. Additionally, the importance of the Caribbean Basin as a whole must be considered in the U.S. vital interests as 44 percent of all foreign trade to the U.S. is handled in the Gulf of Mexico ports and nearly half of the U.S. crude oil imports must pass through the Caribbean Basin. It is easy to see, then, that disruption of the Caribbean SLOC's by an enemy could seriously impact U.S.'s economy and ability to project power abroad.

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The Soviet Union is embarking on a program to build aircraft carriers similar to that now employed throughout the world by the United States. Although it will not be until the mid to late 1990's that these systems could pose a threat to the United States, it is nonetheless going to present a formidable problem for future strategic thinkers and, with naval facilities for support already in place in Cuba, the Caribbean SLOC's will become even more vulnerable when the Soviets can project this kind of power. Presently, the USSR deploys surface combatants and submarines regularly to the Caribbean. These Soviet warships are supported and make port calls routinely in Cuba. Cuba, itself, now sports three FOXTROT class diesel submarines which are ideally suited for SLOC intervention operations. We must not forget that during World War II, the Germans were able to sink 270 merchant vessels in the Caribbean in 1942 with the smaller less technically proficient U-Boat. This feat was accomplished with only a few submarines operating great distances from their support bases. Additionally, Cuba is capable of threatening the Cuban SLOC's with an impressive array of aircraft and missile firing patrol boats (Table 3) which surely must be considered in any U.S. Navy planning for keeping the Caribbean SLOC's open. There can be little doubt that there is already a significant threat existing in U.S. vital interests in the Caribbean and unless countered, will only grow worse by the year 2000.

By far, the biggest threat to the Caribbean Basin does not lie with just the buildup of Soviet equipment in the region but with the spread of Marxist-Leninist revolutions in the area. The danger is, of course, that the more support the Soviet Union has in this region, the harder it would be to counter a Soviet military threat and the easier it would be for the Soviets to subvert any peacetime U.S. initiatives. Cuba has been very instrumental in spreading the seeds of Communist revolution as evidenced by the situation in

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ENDNOTES

1. United States-Latin American Relations, OP. CIT., p.691.
2. Salvador De Madagiaga, The Rise of the Spanish American Empire, p. 342.
3. IBID, p. 427.



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SELECTED CUBAN FORCES (TABLE 3)

SHIP	NO	ARMAMENT	RANGE/COMMENT
Foxtrot SS	3	22 torpedoes	60 day patrol duration
Koni FF	2	4 x 76 mm	1800 nm/14 kt
Osa I/II PTC	18	4 x SS-N-2B/Styx	750 nm/25 kt
Komar PTC	8	2 x SS-N-2B/Styx	670 nm/28 kt
Turya PTH	9	4 torpedoes	800 nm/25 kt
P-4/6 PTL	18	2 torpedoes	450 nm/30 kt
Poinocny LSM	2	4 x 30 mm	900 nm/18 kt
Yevgenya MSC	11		300 nm/10 kt
Sonya MSC	2		22600 nm/10 kt
Aircraft	270	--	--
Fishbed F/J/L	144	2 x 250 kg bombs 4 x AAMs	469 nm w/ext tanks
Flogger F/H	36	6 x 500 kg bombs	650 nm w/ext tanks
An-26 Curl	22	None	600 nm max load 5443 kg

UNREST STATISTICS FOR SELECTED LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES (TABLE 2)

COUNTRY	UNCONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES OF GOVERNMENT SINCE 1930	LEGALIZED COMMUNIST PARTY	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF COMMUNIST	SIGNIFICANT INSURGENCY MOVEMENT
Columbia	3	YES	10-12,000	YES
Costa Rica	2	YES	10,000	Small terrorist organization
Cuba	8	YES	400,000 (Marxist state)	NO
Dominican Republic	5	Several Communist parties exist, some are illegal	7-900	NO
El Salvador	6	NO	Unknown	Active insurgency (Marxist)
Guatemala	8	NO	Unknown	Active insurgency (Marxist)
Haiti	7	NO	Unknown	NO
Honduras	3	NO	1,500	NO
Mexico	0	YES	Unknown	NO, however potential insurgency considered high due to poor economy and lack of land reform
Nicaragua	3	YES	Marxist Govt installed	YES
Panama	5	YES	36,500	NO
Venezuela	5	YES	5,000	NO

CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES POPULATION AND ECONOMIC STATISTICS (TABLE 1)--Continued

COUNTRY	POPULATION	ANNUAL POPULATION GROWTH RATE	LITERACY	LIFE EXPECTANCY	GDP	PER CAPITA GDP	ANNUAL REAL GDP GROWTH RATE	ANNUAL AVG INFLATION	COMMENTS
Jamaica	2.3 million	1.7%	82%	65 yrs	\$ 3.0 billion	\$1,360	0.5% (est)	10%	Based on 1982 data
Barbados	228,000	2%	89%	67 yrs	\$ 1.4 billion	\$6,000	3%	N/A	Based on 1981 data
Grenada	113,000	1.3%	N/A	63 yrs	\$119 million	\$870	2.6%	N/A	Based on 1983 estimates
Martinique	330,000	0.2%	70%	N/A	\$ 1.38 billion	\$4,543	N/A	N/A	Based on 1980 data
Guadeloupe	332,000	0.2%	70%	N/A	\$ 1.18 billion	\$3,765	15.7%	N/A	Based on 1980 data
U.S.	236.5 million	0.9%	99.5%	72 yrs	\$3363.3 billion	\$12,530	4.4%	5%	Based on 1984 figures

\*Former Spanish Colonies

Information presented is based on data found in either the United States Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs Background Notes or the Central Intelligence Agency World Factbook of 1984.

CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES POPULATION AND ECONOMIC STATISTICS (TABLE 1)

COUNTRY	POPULATION	ANNUAL POPULATION GROWTH RATE	LITERACY	LIFE EXPECTANCY	GDP	PER CAPITA GDP	ANNUAL REAL GDP GROWTH RATE	ANNUAL AVG INFLATION	COMMENTS
Mexico	76 million	2.8%	74%	65.4 yrs	\$162.0 billion	\$2,158	-0.2%	58.9%	Based on 1982 data
Panama	1.8 million	2.4%	85%	70 yrs	\$ 3.2 billion	\$1,847	2.4%	5.6%	Based on 1980 data
Trinidad and Tobago	1.1 million	1.1%	95%	66 yrs	\$ 5.03 billion	\$4,800	7%	10%	Based on 1980 data
Venezuela	14.5 million	2.9%	85%	67 yrs	\$ 69.4 billion	\$4,716	2.8%	7.7%	Based on 1982 data
Barbados	256,000	0.4%	99%	70.8 yrs	\$997.5 million	\$3,377	4.4%	12.8%	Based on 1978 data
Belize	145,353	1.0%	80%	60 yrs	\$169 million	\$1,000	-2%	12%	Based on 1982 data
*Columbia	27 million	2.1%	81%	62 yrs	\$ 33.9 billion	\$1,269	-2.5%	24.7%	Based on 1982 data
*Costa Rica	2.27 million	2.3%	90%	70 yrs	\$ 4.98 billion	\$2,238	-3.6%	65%	Based on 1981 data
*Cuba	9.7 million	1.2%	96%	70 yrs	\$9-11 billion	\$900-1100	+1%	N/A	Figures are 1980 estimates
Dominica	80,000	-0.2%	95%	N/A	\$ 56.4 million	\$883	9.4%	N/A	Based on 1984 estimates
*Dominican Republic	5.6 million	2.4%	62%	60 yrs	\$ 7.6 billion	\$1,400	0.0%	N/A	Based on 1982 data
*El Salvador	4.67 million	3%	40%	58 yrs	\$ 3.6 billion	\$700	-5%	30%	Based on 1982 data
*Haiti	5.6 million	2%	23%	45 yrs	\$430 million	\$540	-10%	N/A	Based on 1984 data
*Honduras	4.4 million	3.4%	47%	53 yrs	\$ 2.8 billion	\$710	-1.2%	17%	Based on 1981 data
*Guatemala	7.9 million	2.9%	47%	57 yrs	\$ 8.6 billion	\$1,114	-3.5%	N/A	Based on 1982 data

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the outside threat has never been serious enough to cause any sustained U.S. efforts to rectify these problems to the good of the region. Now, with the help of the surrogate, Cuba, the Soviet Union is exerting great pressure in the region. Whether the Soviet pressure is designed to detract from U.S. NATO commitments or spread communism at our back door for future assault at the very pillars of democracy is of little importance. The facts are that Nicaragua has fallen, Granada was only extracted by exerting force before the situation got completely out of control and, now, other countries such as El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras hang in the balance. It is, therefore, imperative that the U.S. act quickly if total control of large land masses and vital SLOCs are going to be kept out of Soviet hands in the future. The only lasting solution is political, that is Latin American economics must be strengthened through U.S. aid and trade agreements. Also, social and land reform with an emphasis on human rights must be a strong part of any U.S. policy in Latin America. However, in order to stem an already vast Soviet military buildup in Cuba and Nicaragua and prevent a projected linkup with future Soviet power projection forces, the U.S. must build its naval presence in the Caribbean and streamline its control of all forces in the region. Only the confidence that the U.S. is willing to make both economic and military commitments to the Caribbean area will give countries of that region power to resist future Soviet aggression from their fallen neighbors. No greater deterrence can the U.S. offer these countries than to see the U.S. flag flying from a warship in their harbors and having our sailors spreading good will as proof of a working democratic society.

problems that must be overcome. These problems run the usual range such as building housing for dependents and other dependent support facilities, upgrading old buildings and warehouses and providing sufficient steam and electrical power to support the ships at the piers and dealing with the Puerto Rican separatist. To ease some of these problems, at least two of the ships could be FF1052 or FFG7 class reserve frigates. This would not only solve some of the initial crew support problems but would have the twofold effect of getting locals involved and providing a large base of Spanish-speaking sailors to assist in "good will" visits to other Caribbean countries. The composition of the force should be mixed remembering that the force would be augmented by CINCLANTFLT if the crisis appears to be escalating. The proposed mixture would consist of:

2 FF7 or FF1052

2 FF7 or FF1052 (reserve)

2 DD 963

2 MCM or MSH (mine counter measures or sweeping)

This squadron would be administratively controlled by a numbered squadron commander who worked directly for or was dual hatted as the Naval Component, Southern Command. The hydrofoil squadron at Key West would also fall under the Naval Component Commander of the Southern Command. Of course, the redundant Caribbean Naval Forces Command would no longer be required. The elimination of this command would give the Southern Command control of a significant naval force and reduce ambiguous areas of responsibilities and streamline control of all forces in the Caribbean.

In summary, the Caribbean Basin countries have and continue to be regions of poor economic growth and little social movement within their societies. Although the region has always been vital to U.S. economic and strategic goals,

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The U.S. Caribbean naval forces presence in the Caribbean consists mostly of units or task forces operating as part of training exercises, conducting refresher training at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, or special passing exercises from units deploying to or returning from Sixth Fleet deployments. It is fair to mention that there is a squadron of hydrofoils stationed out of Key West, Florida, however, their limited endurance and requirement for intensive material support makes their use limited for sustained operations away from home port. A Caribbean naval force does not have to be large; I personally do not believe a battleship or aircraft carrier group would enhance the U.S. posture in the area that much and such a commitment would likely give the perception of actually detracting from our NATO commitment. However, I believe the force required should be able to perform the following missions:

- o SLOC control and interdiction
- o Sustain patrols over large sea areas
- o AAW/ASW escort of commercial shipping
- o Limited blockade
- o Conduct routing port visits (goodwill and showing the flag)
- o Respond quickly to crisis or augment larger task forces
- o Mine or conduct mine hunting operations of SLOC's
- o Make limited responses to natural disasters such as hurricane

damage

The permanent force should be a squadron of six to eight ships and should be home ported out of Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico, being a Caribbean Island, gives credibility to the U.S. stance in the regions. It is a "ready made" base complete with piers, fuel depot, air strip and other support facilities. There is also a large indigenous population that could further augment base support and repair personnel. Of course, there are

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provide funds for a comprehensive program to support democratic development, improve human rights, and bring peace to Central America through political, diplomatic, and security initiatives were accepted almost as written by President Reagan. The President then formed the Central American Development Organization and requested funding to support regional trade programs. He , also, requested over \$7 billion over the next five years for economic and social programs and \$255.9 million for fiscal year 1985 in military assistance. Additionally, the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act was signed in August of 1983. This program, more commonly known as the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI), basically relieves trade restrictions with qualified Caribbean nations in order to bolster their economies through free trade. Both the increase aid and the CBI should, if properly administered, do much to bring about economic and social reform in the region; however, I am of the personal belief that we, as a nation, may just be a little late and that it is going to take many years of intensive management in this region to rectify the problems and undo Soviet influence.

In the meantime, I believe that the U.S. must increase its military presence in the Caribbean and Central American regions both to show resolve and to counter future Soviet power projection forces. In order to do this we must have forces permanently committed in the area. Although the U.S. is conducting numerous joint exercises with Latin American countries, built a large airfield in Honduras, stationed an infantry brigade in Panama, and has two commands (Southern Command and the Caribbean Forces Command) it has done little to deal with the naval threat to the region. Naval forces are, in my opinion, the most lacking and disorganized of the U.S. military efforts in the Caribbean.



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The Soviet threat to the Central American and Caribbean regions has grown significantly with Marxist alignment of Nicaragua. Cuba, although strategically placed to threaten the more vital Caribbean SLOC's and continental U.S., has no ability to project real power. Cuba's navy is small with no amphibious lift. However, with Nicaragua firmly under Soviet control, large forces can be massed in the Central American region on friendly territory. These forces can, in a few years time, be used to support revolutions either directly through armed intervention or indirectly (as they do now) through programs to fund, equip, and train insurgents. A look at Soviet support to the Sandinistas shows Soviet block deliveries to Nicaragua increasing from 900 metric tons in 1981 to 18,000 metric tons in 1984. The Sandinistas now have 110 Soviet-made tanks, 30 light amphibious tanks, 200 armored personnel carriers, 70 long-range artillery pieces, and nearly 500 rocket launchers, howitzers, and anti-aircraft guns. The Sandinistas also are getting the HIND-D assault helicopter and Soviet-made river crossing systems. This equipment plus their stated intention of expanding their militia to over 200,000 men gives them more than enough force to counter the fragmented rebels operating in their country; they are definitely placing themselves in a position to greatly influence all of Central America with Cuba and the Soviet Union giving absolute support.

Unquestionably, the United States must and is taking initiatives in the Caribbean and Central American regions. U.S. objectives were first defined by the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America in July 1983. This commission consisted of the former Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger and members of both the Republican and Democratic parties. The commission found Central America in acute crisis, caused by deep-seated poverty, injustice, and closed political systems. The commission's report and recommendations to

because they frequently prove themselves incapable of governing large masses of people. This means that a few years after the revolution, the revolutionary may find himself out of the mainstream of political life and either unemployed or relegated to a minor position. On the other hand, a Communist style revolution must first be committed to protecting the ideals of the revolution. This requires the maintenance of a large army which is the perfect place for the revolutionary. Also, the USSR is extremely good at building and equipping such armies. By the very nature of a Communist revolution, the leaders are protected, no demands for free and open elections are made on them. The leaders now take on the role of Dictatorship of the Proletariat with a large army to protect them and all the moral and military support the Soviets can offer.

Latin America, and particularly the Caribbean Basin countries, are ideal for Communist revolutions. Poverty has been made worse by the worldwide recession and social reform is slow and even nonexistent in most of these countries. Cuba has seized onto this fact by providing training and arms support for insurgents. Today insurgents are not just groups of irate farmers and slum dwellers marching on the capitol with baseball bats and pitchforks, but well organized and equipped soldiers with complicated infrastructures and sophisticated weapons. A quick look at the Sandinistas of Nicaragua and their categorical rejection of U.S. overtures for establishing peaceful relations after their revolution will quickly tell one whose support the Sandinistas seek. The Soviet Union, through Cuba, is actively promoting Communist revolution in every country of Central America (with the possible exception of Costa Rica) and in Columbia. Nicaragua can already be included well in Soviet-Cuban camps.

the U.S., recognized the People's Republic of China, and asked the assembled crowd if they would accept Soviet aid if Cuba were invaded. The crowd answered "yes" and to the U.S. there was no question that a Communist state was now in existence only 90 miles from our shores.

On 16 April 1961, a Cuban exile brigade trained by U.S. advisers in Nicaragua came ashore in a place known as the Bay of Pigs. The invaders were spotted immediately. Castro then called on the people of Cuba to rise up against the invasion, which they did. This, combined with promised air support by the U.S. not showing up, put an end to the invasion in four days. Castro won a moral victory as well as a military victory. He not only stopped the invaders but also found an immediate outlet for internal problems. The worst resultant, however, was a cementing of Soviet/Cuban relations which has caused U.S. eyes to be drawn from Europe and focused on the Caribbean area.

Why then is a Communist revolution or a leftist revolution more of a threat than any other revolution in the Caribbean? Surely there are many dictatorships in Latin America, like Somozas of Nicaragua, that the world would be better off without. The answer is definitely--yes! However, the problem with any revolution where the principle political leader is also leading the battles is a reluctance to give up power once the revolution has achieved its goal. After all, no self-respecting fighter who has supported the cause and hidden in the jungles for years while risking death at every turn is simply going to lay down his arms and go back to farming the same small plot of land he left before the fighting began. He expects a piece of the pie that he's been fighting for all this time. If you advertise your revolution as one that is fighting for democracy, then the people are bound to expect elections and free participation in the governing process. Unfortunately, the fighters are sometimes forgotten in the free election arena

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Nicaragua, El Salvador, and events in Granada. With little social and economic progress in the region, the Communist style revolution could easily spread and pose an even greater threat to the U.S. than the Soviet's ambitious efforts toward power projection in the Caribbean.

A quick look at Cuba's role in Latin American politics and, now, with its disruption of world order in Africa, shows that this country can not be taken lightly. It should be remembered that the "Cuban Missile Crisis" of 1962 is probably the closest the U.S. has come to a direct military confrontation with the USSR and that the Soviets view Castro as clearly embarking on a program of reform with the full support of the Cuban proletariat after carrying out a violent "national-bourgeois" revolution. This revolution was, in my personal opinion, not really a Communist revolution but a struggle against a corrupt and oppressive system. Of course, the presence of Raul Castro, who is commonly thought by many to have been a Communist before the revolution, probably gave the Cuban Communist Party its first real inroad to Cuba. The 12 January 1959 executions of 71 Batista supporters accused of crimes against humanity was viewed as totally repugnant in the United States. It didn't take reactionary groups long to exploit this incident and widen the split between the U.S. and Cuba. Castro then replaced the moderate President Urrutia whom he has appointed with Dr. Osvaldo Dorticos as suspected Communist and believed puppet of Fidel Castro. This was, of course, seen by many as a move toward communism. The real problems came, however, when Cuba started taking major U.S. concerns in Cuba. As a result, the U.S. cancelled a 700,000 ton sugar purchase from Cuba, whereupon Khrushchev pledged the USSR to take the sugar. By August 1961, it was public knowledge that Cuban counter-revolutionaries were training near Miami and probably in Nicaragua and Guatemala. Additionally, Castro literally tore up the bilateral military aid treaty with

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